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ADDRESS

ON THE

STUDIES AND OBLIGATIONS

OF THE

COLLEGIATE STUDENT,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHETHEAN AND DIAGNOTHEAN

SOCIETIES OF MARSHALL COLLEGE,

AT THE ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT,

SEPTEMBER 7, A. D., 1847 :

BY J. F. DENNY, ESQ.

MERCERSBURG, PA.

1847.



MARSHALL COLLEGE, }
SEPTEMBER 7, 1847. }

DEAR SIR:—In behalf of the respective Societies we represent, we would tender you our warmest thanks for the instructive and excellent Address with which you favored us this afternoon: and also respectfully request a copy for publication.

Yours, with sentiments of regard,

JOSEPH CLARK,
WM. HENRY MILLER,
J. H. REIGART,

Committee of the Gathean Literary Society.

J. W. SANTEE,
D. E. REYNOLDS,
WM. M. DEATRICK,

Committee of the Diagnothean Literary Society.

JOHN F. DENNY, Esq.

GENTLEMEN:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your polite note of to-day requesting a copy of the Address delivered before the Literary Societies of Marshall College. Although I cannot concur in the partial judgment which you have been pleased to express of its merits, it is, with pleasure, placed at the disposal of any rule adopted by your Societies for the advancement of their usefulness and prosperity.

Very respectfully, your friend and ob't serv't,

JNO. F. DENNY.

Mercersburg, Sept. 7, 1847.

JOSEPH CLARK,
WM. HENRY MILLER,
J. H. REIGART,

Committee of the Gathean Society.

J. W. SANTEE,
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GENTLEMEN OF THE GÆTHEAN AND DIAGNOTHEAN SOCIETIES OF
MARSHALL COLLEGE:

The events of this interesting ceremonial may indeed inspire a sentiment of sadness when viewed as the obsequies of a Collegiate Year, and of intimacies long and ardently cherished; but the hand which incidentally inflicts this wound, is mainly employed in striking from around your graduates the fetters of pupillage, and in consecrating this day as a memorial, in just degrees to you all, of that mental culture and literary acquirement which qualify for the enjoyment of the higher and more responsible fellowships of the social state.

I. Your Societies, gentlemen, are twin scions of the same parental stalk—bound together by a mutual sympathy, a noble emulation, and a common object. The fellow-feeling engendered by habitual association is, in general, a strong bond of union. Even in confederacies hatched for purposes of rapine, or for the subversion of civil order, that principle has a powerful influence in securing alert and concerted action. Of this we have an imaginative, but truthful example, in the most popular work of La Sage; and another, more fearfully realized, in the Jacobinical assemblies of the French Revolution. But the chord which unites such unhallowed combinations as these, is entwined with no fibre of the heart—it has no strand of virtuous sentiment to strengthen it, and is sure to snap asunder when its tension is first put to the trial. A more cordial and reliable principle animates the united action of your societies. Being seated, too, in the heart, all the warm and bright emotions that cluster there are enkindled into activity:—Love, friendship, and a self-sacrificing devotion are grouped in graceful forms around it, endowing it, at once, with an air of moral beauty, and a power that no trial or temptation can overthrow or suborn.

The spirit of emulation, too, gentlemen, which presides in the joint labors of your Societies, is of the same exalted character. Unsullied by the taint of envy or jealousy, it clothes in brilliant charms the objects of your study and research. Shedding its lustre on the pathway of excellence that is open to all, it aims only at a mastery of the truths and mysteries of science, of the graces, and ornaments of literature. It is the ambition of the chivalrous heart, that views the gallant and equal bearing of a competitor with pride; and, like the sailor in the *Æneid*, is as much delighted with a hard-fought and honorable contest as with an easy victory:—

Nou jam *prima* peto Mnestheus, neq; vincere certo:
—Extremos pudeat rediisse.

It is both mean and unnatural to disparage in others the merit which we are conscious ourselves of coveting, or to underrate qualities in them which we are desirous to attain. True magnanimity

will always enjoy a reflective pleasure from the praises bestowed upon a rival, for virtues, with which it is, itself, sensible of being allied.

Governed by these pure and ennobling impulses, your Societies cannot fail to provide the recreation for which they were devised:—a recreation that admits not of inaction—for of that the mind of a student is incapable—but which refreshes the mental faculties by withdrawing them, for a season, from the severe duties of scholastic discipline, to be exercised on gay and gentler themes. From these intervals of relaxation, so propitious to the cultivation of congenial taste, and the frank interchange of thought and feeling, a collegiate life derives its chief enjoyments: while, by their social exercise, the wearied intellect is renovated, and prepared for a profitable resumption of its graver studies. As the accomplished Roman on his return, in after life, to the walks and groves of the Academy, was charmed by the vivid images of his comrades in study, so, gentlemen, will you often recur, with pleasure, to these scenes of your social communion, and find, as brightly associated with them, all that is worthy of remembering in the persons and characters of your absent companions.

II. We have now arrived, gentlemen, at the objects, for the accomplishment of which, mainly, your Societies were organised. Although they may have an independent value in heightening the affections, regulating the temper, and invigorating the intellectual powers; still, their chief importance consists in the ancillary relation which they occupy to the great subject of academical education.—Such, indeed, is the import of their very names; while the one has an abstract reference to the whole circle of knowledge, the other is honored by a personification of the highest scholarship.

An eminent writer (Playfair) has defined Education to be “the art of fitting youth to enter into the world, so as to live happily and well, and enabling them to fill their place in society with honor to themselves, and advantage to the public.” In the College to which your Societies are attached, the system of Education comprises various departments of study: *Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Languages, Belle Lettres, and Mental Philosophy.*

1. There are few employments so well adapted to school the mind and fit it for the practical pursuits of life as Mathematical study. It not only generates those habits of acute and patient attention in which the superiority of one man over another usually consists, but it imparts, also, a facility and grace in disposing of the multiplied calculations and estimates that adhere to the daily transactions of mankind. All the occupations and professions of life are, in a greater or less degree, dependent upon the principles of this science; and some of them, in fact, would be shorn of their chief value if deprived of its aid. It may not be necessary that one should be an adept in this branch of learning to meet most of the ordinary demands of business. A man may judge of the sharpness of his axe or razor, without ever having heard of Euclid, or of the qualities of the angles that form the

edges of those implements. Neither are the skill and dexterity of a ship carpenter required to cut down a sapling, nor a whole code of theology to unfold the obvious truth of human depravity. But should it become necessary, in a judicial inquiry, for instance, to infer the nature of a wound from the form and impetus of the weapon, with the minute accuracy demanded in a case of life and death—should the guilt of felony be suspended upon a comparison of the instrument supposed to be used, with the gashes made in the timber—or if, instead of felling a sapling, the elegant proportions of a ship were to be hewn and adjusted: passing by the elementary truth of the fall of man, should the sublimer doctrines of divinity point, for their highest illustration, to the courses of the planets and the parallaxes of the stars—then, ay, then, would the guiding and convincing demonstrations of this science be anxiously appealed to, and its discoveries fondly sought after, as among the proudest triumphs of the human intellect.

We do not mean to say that the education you are seeking should make you aspire at the eminence of professorships in Mathematics. Such a superiority is the lot of but few, and perhaps, not unfrequently, the reward of a heaven-born genius. A period of two thousand years has conferred immortality on some half dozen of names in this department of learning; and as many centuries, more, may fail to cast the shade of higher merit upon the memory of Euclid, Newton, Leibnitz, Euler, La Place, and Bowditch. It is a great gratification, however, that the intricacies of this science, upon which the marvellous proficiency of these favorites of nature has shed such a flood of light, may now be approached, even by the obscurest student, with an encouraging hope of profit.

2. Natural Philosophy, which embraces in its extensive signification many subjects of inquiry that have now risen to the grade of distinct sciences, is a fruitful and animating source of knowledge.—While, in one of its divisions, it penetrates deep below the crust of the earth, and, by an almost unerring discernment, reveals the nature and forms of the various strata that compose its structure; in another, it explains the diversified phenomena that spring from the action of material or æriform bodies upon its surface, by reducing them to general laws. Again, as if in scorn of mere terrestrial treasures, it rises in sublime flight to the sphere of the stars, and searches for unexplored mysteries to enrich the already transcendent discoveries of the solar system. The fruits of this science, both in the general and minute survey which it takes of the objects of research, are of inestimable importance to many of the active pursuits of life; indeed it is from the practical uses to which its discoveries are applicable, that Technology, or the device of making science subservient to art, has originated. From its expositions of the nature, relations, and combined operations of the mechanical powers, many of the staple employments of society derive their support; and, usually, in proportion to the skill and discrimination with which these lessons are applied, is the spirit of competition, in those branches of industry, successful.

In the grand developments of Geology, not only may the curious inquirer find indicia of the very period when the creating hand was first stretched forth to mould the regular and grotesque forms of matter that are found in the texture of the globe, and the Plutonist and Neptunist derive arguments for their respective theories of that creative process; but, what is of much higher account, the productive classes of society may draw from that prolific source the materials of art, to multiply and augment the comforts and enjoyments of life.—Much labor and treasure have been fruitlessly expended from a neglect of the principles of this science; but its light is invaluable to the engineer, the architect, and the miner, for determining localities, and searching after the materials and minerals that belong to their respective callings. The attainments of Mineralogy and Chemistry follow fast upon the gigantic strides of Geology, and nourish, by a more varied and scrutinizing operation, the growth of many of the manufactures and arts. Improving the discoveries of Geology, by separating and analysing the bulky masses which it displays, these minuter investigators extract all the rich properties that lie embedded within them. From these valuable stores the physician may learn to compound his medicines, and the agriculturalist to prepare the compost for his soil, and regulate its productive power for a change or succession of crops. Here the potter may have recourse, to improve the quality and finish of his wares—the painter, to brighten and variegate his paints—the dyer, to give permanence and clearness to his colors—and the lapidary, to enrich and beautify his collection of gems. These various occupations must advance towards perfection with the progress of the sciences upon which they are so dependent; and the student who may be honored, by adding to the discoveries already known, will deservedly also rank among the benefactors of society.

The amazing power of Steam is also among the achievements of this branch of Philosophy. A third of a century has scarcely elapsed since the decease of its renowned discoverer, and already this resistless agent has supplanted almost every other species of motive power on the great thoroughfares of trade and travel. Where the water fall is wanting, steam is now also the universal substitute for animal power in the propulsion of machinery adapted to the various departments of manufacture. By means of this matchless agent, mountains of cumbrous merchandize are transported to distant points with the celerity of Eastern magic; and the flight of Houssain, on his tapestry seat, has lost its feature of romance in the winged speed of the Locomotive Car. The signal improvement also, which it has introduced into the intercourse and correspondence of society, may not only serve to foster and enliven friendships that might otherwise prematurely decay, but has given a new and noble impulse to the commerce and enterprize of the world. Both labor and capital have experienced its vivifying spirit in the enlargement of the sphere of industry; and settlements, that were lately wrapt in obscurity and indolence, have been roused into activity by being placed in the vicinity of the market.

The wonders of the Daguerreotype are also among the trophies here to be commemorated—a mysterious yet rapid process, by which a faithful transcript is taken either of the inanimate scenes of nature, or of the countenance of living man, and indelibly imprinted, in all their exact and impressive lineaments, upon a metallic plate. Complete as this beautiful invention already seems, there is reason to believe that future experiments will still add to its perfection. The discovery of gun cotton may also be the commencement of an era like that of gun powder; and although its advantages are yet precarious, and undefined, they are not likely to remain so; long, amid the speed and spirit of such an age as this.

With more truth and less audacity than the adventure of Prometheus, the Philosophy of our own day has also snatched the electric fire from the heavens, and sent it abroad on messages of business or intelligence. The Magnetic Telegraph is the stupendous wonder of the age. The subtle agent, employed by it, traverses his course with the rapidity of the lightning, and is always a ready and trusty emissary, whether charged with matter of interest or curiosity. The longings of kindred—the anxieties of love—the repinings of sickness—and the cravings of business, lie, all, within the range of its benevolent action; while, by its fleet and impartial warnings, the speculator is despoiled of his precedence, and the profits of a rising market are made the stake of an equal competition.

3. A familiar acquaintance with the *Learned Languages* is an essential part of an Academic Education. They form the medium through which history has transmitted all that is interesting and instructive in the manners and habits of the enlightened nations of antiquity. The political and civil history of races, now entirely extinct, but once polished, refined, and wielding the destiny of all others, survives in their beautiful and expressive tongues, while their massive and magnificent architectural monuments have yielded to the corrosion of time, and mouldered in the dust. Their languages, although antiquated, still speak eloquently; and in them are treasured up their religion, laws, philosophy, social customs, and poetry. From this fountain have been derived the rudiments of the free institutions of modern times, as well as the best systems of laws now in use among many of the civilized nations of the earth. If the Diet of the Swiss Cantons is not wholly devoid of analogy to the Amphycionian Council, neither were the sages who framed our own Constitution insensible to the merits of Athenian polity. And the rights of the people, both under the despotisms of Europe and the more lenient forms of our own State Governments, enjoy, at this day, the protection of the just and enlightened maxims of the Roman Code.

Whoever then would form a correct judgment of those nations that snatched from impending tyranny and barbarism the arts and erudition of the Ptolemaic ages, and sent them, with the improvements of their own genius, to posterity—whoever would trace the spirit of their free systems of Government, the forms and influence of their religious establishments, their plans of education, their legislation and laws,

their principles of morals and philosophy, their proficiency in the arts, their eloquence, and the elegant and lively tone of their epic and dramatic compositions, must devote no inconsiderable portion of his time to the study of the native languages in which these great features of their character were primarily recorded.

It is true that much of this ancient literature is now accessible through a muddy current of translations, none of which is at all comparable to the original in the living spirit that inspires, the characteristic turn of thought, the idiomatic point, and the felicitous expression. Some of them, indeed, are but little superior, in fidelity, to the travesties of Swift; while, in others, the bright corruscations and epigrammatic elegance of the author are either extinguished in a cloud of misty prose, or obscured by the dull and pedantic conceptions of the copyist. The most partial reviewer of the English *Iliad* admits, that the sublimity of the Greek composition was suffered to exhale in the hands of its celebrated translator; and, in a province where the ability of Pope was doomed to failure, it is certainly unsafe to rely upon the labors of inferior scholars. The taste and learning of Dryden have as little succeeded in embellishing the English language by a transfusion of the beauties of Virgil; and he who has acquired a relish for the vigorous and glowing numbers of the Roman Satirist, will not readily exchange them for the nervous version of the British critic. In the business of translation, the mind is fettered by the thinking faculty, its habits of action, and the motive that directed it, being personal to the original writer: the task, therefore, by its very nature, disclaims novelty, and forbids that cogitative display which forms the charm of literary performances. The ancients, with few exceptions,* were too independent to practise this slavish art; and a Johnson, among the moderns, has furnished an example of the genius requisite, to infuse into the freer work of imitation, the delicacy and inspiration of the model. The conclusion of the tenth Satire is certainly not dishonored by the devotional solemnity and beauty of the following:

“ Pour forth thy fervors for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resigned;
For love which scarce collective man can fill;
For patience sovereign o’er transmuted ill;
For faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind nature’s signal of retreat:
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain;
With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness it cannot find.”

The study of the learned Languages is attended with other advantages, of a different kind, but, perhaps, no less valuable. These consist, in disabusing the mind of the student of narrow prejudices in favor of his own age and country, and in training it also to habits of critical analysis and research. When the reading and observation of one have been confined to the limited compass of the period and country in which he lives—having no standard of comparison, he ca

* Cicero is charged by respectable authority, with translating Aratus, the Poet cited by the Apostle Paul.

form no just conception of a title to superiority set up for any other age, or people : but let the transactions and attainments of other races and epochs of the world be made familiar to his mind, and his opinions soon become subdued and liberalized, and he is prepared to reason on events, that transpire, with the caution and discrimination of a sound judgment.

In construing a foreign author, it is not merely necessary that expertness in grammatical rules, and a familiar acquaintance with idiomatic phrases and the art of parsing be brought to the task ; but some knowledge of the style and classic grade of the author, of the manners of the age in which he flourished, and of the object which his treatise aims to accomplish, are equally indispensable to true and enlightened interpretation. It is needless to say, that the student who has possessed himself of these qualifications, has undergone no ordinary process of mental discipline. We may add, that the establishment of Professorships in many of the seminaries of learning, for instruction in the various living languages of the civilized world, is a sufficient guaranty that the time allotted to them, also, is not withdrawn from more important studies.

IV. The prominence given to *Belle Lettres* in the arrangement of College Exercises, denotes its high claims upon the attention of the student. Polite Literature, it is true, is classed rather among the fashionable and ornate, than the useful branches of Education : but while it affords a pleasing and exciting employment to the mind, it also exerts no mean influence over the modes, practices, and movements of society. No one is well fitted for the enjoyments of cultivated life, whose taste and temper have never experienced its chastening and refining power ; and none more keenly awaken the derision and contempt of its sensitive nature, than the pedant, who, having merely tasted its purifying stream, affects an ostentatious display of saturation.

To affirm that the accomplishment of this study consists more in ornament than utility, would be to exclude from its province the majestic art of Eloquence. This noble attribute, which so few possess in its highest charms, is indeed a graceful endowment. *Magna est enim admiratio copiosi sapienter que dicentis*—is the testimony of one of its brightest examples ; but who, that is at all versed in the history of its transcendent exploits, can overlook its influence as a principle of human action ? When, in the hour of imminent danger from invasion, the citizens of a renowned republic, as if insensible of its approach, were ingloriously reposing within their walls,—what power was it that roused them suddenly from their lethargy, and transformed them into a resistless band of mailed warriors ? What agency, too, contributed largely to the rescue of another free state, when menaced by a sanguinary conspiracy that had enlisted in its support the veterans of the army, and men dignified by patrician rank ? What strange fire was it that, in the days of our fathers, leaped from the tongues of a Chatham and a Burke, in the legislative halls of the parent state, and after consuming her ministers of oppression, flashed

brightly and benignly on the pathway of these infant colonies in their march to freedom? And what, also, in that same eventful period, nerved the arm of those enslaved colonies, and sent their hardy population to the camp and the field, half famished, and half naked, but high and dauntless in spirit, to bear the burden of a patriot's armor and reap the trophies of a patriot's triumph? What, I repeat, what mysterious power was it that performed these wonders, that has adorned the pages of history with such proud memorials of human achievement? *Eloquence*, gentlemen—yes, *Eloquence*—that matchless quality of man that can start into terrific commotion all the moral elements of his nature, for good or for evil, with more appalling effect, than the action of the central fire upon the explosive agents that shake the frame-work of the globe which he inhabits.

Deaf to the allurements of empty and common-place topics, the genial sphere of this art lies among themes of magnitude and interest. Questions of State policy, judicial trials, morals, and religion, attract its readiest and most radiant homage. Its loftiest displays adorn the dignity of the Senate hall, the sobriety of the forum, and the solemnity of the church; and he who would frequent such scenes as these, in quest merely of a gift from the Graces, can surely have no reason for surprise in finding it garnished with an offering from the altar of Minerva.

Poetry has also a place within this department of knowledge—which, indeed, for the last century, nearly, has comprised within its scope the whole series of the fine arts, under the general head of *Æsthetics*. The labors of the Muse embody the richest tributes of genius, and afford both a stimulating and instructive occupation to the mind. “Here we have fiction full of truth, and wisdom fashioned in a thousand shapes”:

“Not empire to the rising sun
By wisdom, conduct, valor, won,
Not greatest wisdom in debates,
Nor framing laws for ruling States,
Such heavenly influence require,
As how to strike the Muse's lyre.”—SWIFT.

Men, whose eminent ability and learning have shed a lustre upon their memory in every polished age, have not hesitated to dedicate a portion of their time to the cultivation of its verse. Few of them, it is true, have bequeathed the treasures of their genius to posterity in the form of regular poems; but the names of Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, although far from the summit, are not without a place in the ascent of Parnassus. The sublime inspirations of Job and Isaiah have immortalized the virtues of man, both in his human relation as a sufferer, and in his divine embassy as a prophet; and the high-born effusions of the epic and dramatic muse have thrown a delightful fascination around the secular annals of later periods. There are few assemblies at the present day that rival the capacity of a Grecian or Roman audience in weighing the merits of a public oration or discourse; and hence, the finished perfection of those ancient rhetorical compositions which form a part of your studies. This fact is, perhaps, chiefly at-

tributable to the oral recitations of their poets and rhetoricians before the multitude, and the popular taste naturally inspired by the manners of the age for dramatic representations. These theatrical performances were the schools of public instruction: enjoying the protection of the State, and at times the munificence of the treasury, they served to diffuse, extensively, among the masses, a refined taste for literature. The student of antiquity must, therefore, carefully consult the poetic productions of a remote age, if he would arrive at a correct and critical knowledge of the manners and character of the people who then flourished.

The dulcet strains of Damon and Manalchas sung the requiem of the Augustan age; and the soft tones of the lyre were drowned, for a season, by the clangor of the trumpet. The incentives of the poet were obliged to give place to the aspirations of the warrior. The tumultuous pursuits of war and conquest seized upon the public mind, and banished the attractions of literature to the recesses of the cloister. Mingling, in that tranquil seclusion, with the chrystal stream of christianity, the contemned exile came forth, at a future day, in renovated beauty, to soften and irradiate the milder enthusiasm of a more generous era. Yielding to its gentle influence, Teutonic barbarism was exorcised of its spirit, and engaged its nobler energies in the more civil enterprizes of chivalry and devotion. The plumed knight and saintly crusader sought refreshment from their toil in the raptures of the Troubadours. Strains of love and piety enlivened the dullness of the mediæval period in the central provinces, and soon sent their thrilling echoes beyond the chain of the Alps. The melodious homage thus paid to Religion and Love, awakened the enthusiasm of a Dante and a Petrarch; and the *Divina Comedia* of the one, and the Canzonets of the other, served to rekindle a flame that had been extinguished for centuries on the banks of the Tiber. These luminous works of genius stamped their character upon the age that succeeded. Lyric, satiric, and dramatic composition employed the pens of statesmen and scholars; and while the laity revelled in the enjoyment of voluptuous verse, the austerity of the church was considered in no danger of defamation by an alliance with the buskin.

Poetry, in time, extended her domain to other climes. On the Continent, the German language invaded, and, at length, supplanted the Latin in recording its treasures; and the ruder dialect of the Anglo-Saxon was moulded, by master minds, to a consistence not less adapted to the expression of its delicacy and pathos. Thus, the exploits of the Muse gave to ages and nations their literary complexion; and much that belongs to the gravity of History has come down to us on her bright and bounding stream.

Romance has also its claims, in this connection, on the attention of the Scholar. We use the term rather in its exact or artistical sense—a sense that excludes the whole mawkish tribe of fictions that are spawned in a vitiated atmosphere, only to be hurried through an ephemeral existence to oblivion. Tales that are invented to lash into morbid excitement the imaginations of readers, or to extol with gra-

phic elegance the victories of vice and intrigue, have no just pretensions to be classed among works of Polite Literature. Education involves the idea of intellectual and moral culture; whatever therefore tends to deprave the affections, or degrade the mind, is inimical to its aim. These spurious productions being then debarred, by a righteous judgment, from the privilege of *Æsthetic* rank, are unworthy a place in the library of an educated man. Truth and virtuous fidelity, enforced by the power and clad in the drapery of genius, can alone commend fictitious composition to the favor of an enlightened public. We do not, indeed, concur in that sanctified rigor that would clip the wings of the mind in its efforts to rise, and restrict its delineations to the narrow forms of sensible objects. Truth and fidelity are not necessarily incorporated with all the elements of their actual manifestation. These elements are often more casual than normal, and the moral qualities which they may be thought to symbolize, may often be more obscured than illustrated by a slavish accuracy in their recital. A rule of proscription, founded on so weak a prejudice, would not only exterminate from approved literature much that is edifying and beautiful in the ancient and modern classics, but cast discredit also on the Parables of Scripture. Fortunately, the day has gone by when a sentence, so much at war with the principles of sound taste and liberality, can find a respectable advocate.

Works of Fiction, when inspired by the pure and truthful spirit mentioned, represent the sober merits of history enlivened by the attractive hues of fancy; and they often succeed better in conveying a just portraiture of national character, than a more elaborate historical narrative. History faintly informs us what a people were; Romance may vividly apprise us of what they did. The one etches out the general design and outline—the other applies the coloring, with that minute regard to the distribution of light and shade, which is requisite to stamp the expression.

Most of the languages of the civilized world have furnished exquisite specimens of this glowing species of composition. The English, Spanish, French, and German, are all honored depositories of its brightest essays; and, although Fame may have opened her inmost sanctuary to transatlantic merit, in this department of Letters, there are fruits of American talent that are certainly entitled to admission far beyond the vestibule.

In conclusion of this subject, it is not to be dissembled, that Fictitious Literature, when much indulged in, exerts a baneful control over the taste and inclination; and unless regulated by the counterpoise of more solid studies, it may not only unfit the mind for any graver acquisition, but, obliterate from it, all that has been already earned, by earlier and better directed diligence.

V. We have reserved the subject of Mental Philosophy to the last, but not with any view to disparage it by the order of arrangement. Metaphysical studies have long since lost their charm for the speaker, nor has there been any light thrown by recent inquiries upon the fundamental principles of the science, that promises to increase

its attraction. The subject, it must be conceded, involves the most sublime and refined investigations, and, perhaps, as much as any other, requires the exercise of the critical and scrutinizing powers of the mind whose varied developments it seeks to distinguish and explain.

The intellect—its nature, relations, and phenomena—and matter—its absolute existence and sensible properties, are the grand objects to be explored by the metaphysician. Nor has ingenuity failed to connect the conclusions of reason on these topics, in their ultimate and profound bearings, with the doctrines of morality and religion.—When the inquiries of Philosophy comprise the spiritual nature of man, and his duties, as an accountable being, they are not without forcible claims upon his respect and study: but there is still a high and calm satisfaction in knowing, that a due sense of moral and religious obligation is attainable, without much proficiency in these abstruse speculations.

The original and true sources of human knowledge presents a question which forms the distinctive feature of the most modern and approved theories in this science. The philosophy of that acute thinker and reasoner, Locke, rejected the supposition of innate ideas, and resolved the fountain of knowledge into the two processes of sensation and reflection: the recipient agent being comparatively passive, and waiting upon the action of the bodily organs in the former process, but originating the latter itself, by the unassisted and native energy of its own inherent faculties. The *Essay on the Human Understanding* established an era in the history of Mental Philosophy; and subject to such latitude of construction as a liberal student may allow, and the shrewd mind of the author could hardly have refused to admit, it contains, perhaps, the most reasonable exposition, and the most sound and oracular analysis of the principles upon which the science of the human mind is founded. This profound treatise, which shed such a lustre upon the age in which it appeared, like the splendid performances of Bæthæus and Gallileo, sprung from the seclusion of a persecuted exile, but the intimate companion of Newton. The grandeur of the work is not free from many crudities of expression, which were probably suggested by too lively a prejudice against the sceptical theories that were then rapidly spreading in some parts of the continent; but these blemishes, like the spots on the sun, can scarcely be noticed amid the splendor that surrounds them. The fanciful subtleties of the French school were soon exploded by the more rational system of the English philosopher; but the honor was not of long duration; for the extirpator of heresy was afterwards transformed, in the crucible of the Sorbonne, into a heresiarch himself, and doctrines, that ran into the very extreme of Materialism, were professedly reared upon the basis of his researches. Having exposed the fallacies of the ideal hypothesis, his authority was artfully cited by later theorists for the equally extravagant novelty, that all ideas are but secretions of the brain. The injustice was keenly felt and repelled by the sagacity of his own countrymen; and, the danger

threatened by its logical tendency, to prevalent modes of faith, roused also an avenging spirit among the more sensitive and enthusiastic inquirers beyond the Rhine. The retaliation was ample and effective: the result of a combined movement, but under distinct equipments—of a simultaneous onset by different and distant corps, striving for the overthrow of a common enemy, but directing their assaults by almost opposite rules of warfare. The *common sense philosophy* and the *critical philosophy* were triumphant allies in the struggle, but soon became competitors for the spoils. The fiend of scepticism was dethroned and vanquished, and the allied assailants are now waging a contest between themselves for the vacant supremacy.

This leads us to make a few remarks upon the general outlines of the Scotch and German systems of Metaphysics. Anything like an elaborate dissertation is forbidden by the occasion—if, indeed, the consciousness of the speaker did not admonish him of his incapacity for so important an undertaking. Besides, such seems to be the obscurity of the subject itself, and so arbitrary the import of the language employed to elucidate it, as to make the most luculent commentary but partially intelligible, only, to the ordinary reader.

The doctrine of the Scotch School—known as the Common-Sense theory—assumes the fundamental postulate—that all our knowledge of matter and mind is relative, only, and not absolute, derivative, and not original; that, of pure existence, we can form no conception separate from its sensible qualities, or phenomenal displays. For example—a rose is perceived to be what it is, by the cognizance which the senses take of its figure, fragrance, color, flavor, and texture.—Deprive it of these properties, and there is nothing left for a sentient principle to discern. In like manner, consciousness, which is conversant in the intellectual world as the senses of the body are in the material, attests the existence of mind only by its diversified operations of judging, reasoning, thinking, imagining, remembering, &c.; and if it were denied these modes of its manifestation, there would be no form of existence remaining, capable of being apprehended.—This is sufficiently plain for the comprehension of any one: nor does it demand any concession subversive either of religious belief or sound morals.

To affirm that science is degraded, by hemming its adventurous spirit within such contracted boundaries, is to pretend that the human mind has not been restricted by its Creator to a finite sphere of action; and to complain that the structure and vitality of the intellect are left, by the theory, to share the dissolution of the body, is only to assail an assumed truth—that the constitution of the mind and its capability of action, when severed from its corporeal partner, are problems far beyond the reach of human scrutiny. Endowed with exalted powers, and impelled by a restless ambition to widen its domain of knowledge, the mind of man is ever aiming to transcend the bounds which nature has assigned to its efforts. But when we consider the barrenness of its arduous and most patient labors in this intricate science, for a long line of centuries, the time would seem to have

arrived, when the neglected maxim—that the highest wisdom consists in a just sense of the limits of human knowledge, should command its full share of reverence.

It may be proper to add, that the system just noticed has been distinguished by its adversaries, without the sanction of its friends, by the term *empirical*—founded on the presumption, that its principles make their appeal more to popular credulity, than to scientific conviction.

The Critical Philosophy as originally unfolded by its founder, did not radically differ, in one of its leading features, from that which we have been considering. But while Kant, in a fair measure, inculcated the derivative and phenomenal nature of human knowledge, his disciples gradually repudiated the doctrine, until it was wholly refined away by the sublimated ingenuity of the Eclectics. The logical process adopted by the continental schools is the reverse of that practised in the insular Universities. According to the former, all that is known of matter or mind consists of deductions from an elevated and purified perception of the absolute and infinite, which the reasoning faculty, by the very necessity of its nature, perpetually enjoys: it being the peculiar allotment of reason to be ever conversant about truth, in its most mysterious, remote, and sublime phases and combinations.—Pure and unconditional existence—including the being and essence of the Deity himself—it is maintained, lies within the native sphere and immediate discernment of this exalted power of the mind; and, from its lucid revelations, the whole intellectual and material creations, with their established laws, may, by a sort of synthetic or algebraic process, be clearly evolved. The abstract or spiritualized information, thus obtained, is attested by consciousness, and is as perfect and substantial as any acquisition of the mind derived through the senses.—Thus, all knowledge is arrived at by a regular gradation from primitive truth; and the world, with its varied phenomena, is but a logical inference from that high and pregnant principle. The belief and opinions of mankind, are discarded by the advocates of this theory, as evidence unworthy the dignity and certainty of science; and those who doubt its sublime positions are either unheeded for their obtuseness, or compassionately excused, for never having thought of the logical correlation between the finite and limited and the infinite and unlimited:—the one, it is alleged, being unavoidably suggested by the other—and both, therefore, equally real, and equally objects of distinct conception to the mind. But I must forbear. Such is a meagre sketch of the grand distinction which pervades the two systems of Mental Philosophy now in vogue among the learned; and he who would undertake to decide upon their respective pretensions to the honor of true science, should be well versed in the reasonings and demonstrations of the great masters whose lives and talents have been devoted to their illustration. As my own gravest contemplations have not been able to grasp the absolute verities of critical learning, I hesitate but little in avowing a preference for the homely and perspicuous truths of the Common Sense Philosophy. It must be granted,

however, that, exposed as the acutest student may be to loose himself at times, in the mazes and perplexities of the rival system, its delicate and refined distinctions have a superior charm for minds of a speculative turn. After all, the abiding defect of Metaphysical science, notwithstanding the eloquent vindications of its admirers, is, its lack of near, practical connection with the ordinary business of life: the most prejudiced observer will, nevertheless, admit its real value in disciplining the mind of the student, and improving both its attentive and discriminating powers.*

Such, gentlemen, are some of the objects and advantages of the studies to which your Societies are primarily dedicated. Permit me to add, with earnestness, that useful and ornamental as they are, the majestic truths of the Scriptures are far above them all, and should command the first and warmest homage of your minds and hearts.—Indeed literary attainments are then, only, truly profitable and comely, when sanctified by the fervid and graceful spirit of Christianity. Like every other earthly pleasure, they are fleeting and insipid, unless flavored by a foretaste of that enduring and vivid transport which comes from above.

III. There remains, gentlemen, to be noticed, briefly, some of the motives that should actuate you to an assiduous prosecution of the studies to which you are called.

1. Literary pursuits are adapted to advance the happiness of all who engage in them. They afford an agreeable stimulus to the mind, and serve to excite and cherish a laudable ambition. He who is deprived of them may, it is true, have most of his time absorbed by the demands of business: but still, there will be intervals of leisure—which wealth never fails to purchase, and the toil of poverty is forced to invoke—that the treasures of literature can invest with a new charm and welcome. Much time, that is worse than thrown away in the haunts of dissipation and indolence, might, by this happy employment, be consecrated to the nobler purposes of moral and intellectual improvement. There is nothing better fitted to soothe and restore the wearied spirit, after the exhaustion of severe labor, than the gentle

* The intelligent reader will be in no danger of confounding the nature and province of Metaphysical Science, as here briefly noticed, with that boundless field of intellectual phenomena which expands itself over the entire history of man. All the concerns of life are controlled, modified, and impelled—with a due subordination to the Divine Will—by the progressive energy of the human mind; and, of course, much that is of practical value may be sought and unfolded by diligent inquiry in this wide sphere of its dominion. "But researches, strictly metaphysical, are restrained to the narrow theatre of the qualities and relations of material objects, and the mind's potential organization and modes of developement—a study which it can hardly be denied, has, as yet, established no claims to fecundity in either the moral, religious, or industrial departments of society."

Shakespear, in his Dialogue of the Shepherds, has satirized, in perhaps too free a humor, the logical subtleties in *physics* that prevailed in his day:

Tough. Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?

Cor. No more, but that I know the more one sickens, the worse at ease he is; and that he that wants money, means, and content, is without three good friends:—That the property of rain is to wet, and fire to burn:—That good pasture makes fat sheep; and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun: that he that hath learned no wit by nature nor art, may complain of good breeding, or comes of a very dull kindred.

We are left to speculate on the kind of reception which this penetrating thinker might have given to the more refined dialectics of a future age, in another branch of Philosophy that is still further removed from the range of demonstrative evidence.

enticement of letters, or the curious allurements of science and art. No matter what the vocation—professional, mechanical, or agricultural—there may be always found among the stores of learning, something of sufficient interest to enliven the recess of its duties. Youth can seldom decypher its future lot in the bright anticipations of early zeal and aspiration. Should the fortunes of any of you be connected with the mechanical arts, a wide field will be opened before you to promote their growing perfection, as well as to cultivate your own inventive powers. The man of erudition may direct, from his retired study, the application of others, or implant in their minds the rudiments of learning; but it is seldom enough that the machinery and resources of manufacturing industry are indebted to his efforts for any valuable addition. Men, upon whose minds science has shed perhaps only the glimmer of its elementary principles, but whose time and thoughts are habitually bestowed upon some industrial occupation, generally engross the praise of useful inventions; but if these active pursuits were more commonly subject to the management of a sharpened and accomplished intellect, doubtless the monuments of inventive genius would be greatly multiplied, and enhanced in value.

Should your lot be cast among the liberal professions, as they are styled—though we know not why one occupation of society should be adjudged more *liberal* than another—the attainments of learning will be in still greater requisition, for a creditable discharge of the duties incurred. He who assumes the responsible task of guiding and instructing others, can neither earn their respect, nor his own, if he be deficient in the acquirements becoming the station. The pedant, we grant, may win popular applause; and the quack may cunningly reach an ascendancy over the illiterate and superstitious that will turn every thing touched, by the wand of his impostures, into gold. But such success is often as evanescent as vapid. True merit will not long remain under eclipse; and the heart that is corroded by the vice of extortion—scorned alike by the virtuous and the wise—can never appreciate the luxury of wealth.

2. But, gentlemen, you owe it not merely to yourselves, but to your parents and guardians, and the community at large, to omit no diligence in the discharge of your collegiate duties. How gratifying must it be to those who have had the charge of your infant years, that you are favored with so enviable an opportunity of improving your minds, and enriching your stores of knowledge? A royal parent once expressed his rapturous delight that his son was born a contemporary of the renowned sage who afterwards became his preceptor; and, doubtless, the high advantages of instruction which are offered here, have thrilled, with a like sentiment, the breasts of those who stand in that relation to you. Gratitude should, itself, restrain the wayward spirit of a young man, who has experienced the kind solicitude of a natural or legal guardian, until qualified, by years and discretion, to become his own guide. The decline of this filial affection, so just in its returns, and so precious in the character which it decorates, is enumerated by a classic author among the memorable evils of the last and

iron age ; nor is it less remarkable, that its free indulgence, at a remote, but flourishing period of the world, was required as an indispensable qualification for the magistracy. If there be any earthly spectacle that can animate the bosom of a parent with an intense and gratifying joy, it is found in the eminent virtues, the laudable aims, and successful career of a child, whose tender years have been watched over with all the misgivings of a parent's anxiety, and all the devotion of a parent's love. And oh, if there be a grief that can wring a parent's heart, and cloud with despondency his declining age, it is felt when the offspring of his affection has either abused or passed with honor the noviciate of youth, only to debase the matured faculties of manhood by sensuality and sloth.

3. We have said that the great body of society is also interested in a faithful pursuit of your studies. The life of Education is social and diffusive : while it forms a part of the private furniture of the individual, it is, also, both in theory and practice, the property of the community to which he belongs. Among the great ends aimed at by systems of general education in a State, the most prominent are—the preservation of the public liberty, and the maintenance of its political and social institutions. The national mass has, therefore, a right to expect these services at the hands of such of its youth as have enjoyed the advantages of collegiate instruction. In this country, where the people compose the sovereignty, both the stability of the government, and the jarring interests dependent upon its patronage, have a vital concern in the enlightened character of its population.—Under a conviction of this truth, the several States of the Union have established, within their own domain, schools and seminaries of learning, and applied a generous portion of their revenues to embellish and endow them. The complex nature of our confederacy, and the diversities of feeling and policy—political, sectional, and industrial—that pervade it, require no ordinary degree of mental energy and study to preserve their just equipoise. It is true, that among the ranks of the illiterate, men of strong intuitive genius may, at times, be found, who are, in some measure, competent to this duty ; but the nation will be always prone to look to the walks of Education for the qualifications of its public functionaries. Every civilized country abounds with examples to shew, that it is to the schools and colleges the sovereign power turns, when the offices of State are to be filled, and that to scholars and graduates the responsible trusts are habitually committed.

The age has passed away, even in the realms of despotism, when it was fashionable to see the seeds of sedition sown broadcast with the elements of knowledge ; and mankind are now considered not only better fitted, by the lights of education, for the management of their private affairs, but, also, for the preservation of the public order, and the national institutions. Indeed, it is strange, how an opinion ever could have obtained, that in proportion as men are plunged in ignorance, they grow sensible of their rights and privileges ; and that their capacity to detect abuses and errors in government, and

their disposition to correct them by temperate and tranquil efforts, are endangered as they become wise ! There is no organized form of liberty that can wish to evade the scrutiny of its subjects, and, under those best known to us, at the present day, the most enlightened and influential members of their public councils are also the most resolute champions of popular freedom. It is not from the ambition of the learned that government has fears for its security, or the people cause to tremble for their rights ; but the danger lies in the rise of an aristocracy of rank and wealth, against the encroachments of which the panoply of knowledge is the only reliable safeguard.

Gentlemen, that transforming power which sprung from its cradle, on the banks of a classic stream—where barbarism has again upraised its sceptre—to irradiate, for a season, with its richest splendours, the annals of the East—which, afterwards, gathered up its strength, in sanctuary seclusion, for an interval of repose, while nations were involved in turmoil, and chivalry filled the world with warriors—which reappeared, refreshed, on the return of peace and order, to beautify and aggrandize the scenes from which it fled :—Yes, that mighty power is now high in the ascendant, in the full proportions of its grace and majesty,—fast veiling in hues of unsurpassed grandeur the whole area of civilization, and gradually seducing beneath its benign sway, the degenerate abodes of infamy and oppression. That power is Literature and Knowledge. Let us cheer its onward march to supremacy—let us pledge all our faculties to advance its standard, until Darkness and Despotism be banished from the earth, and Light and Liberty enthroned in their stead.

4. Lastly, the honor and prosperity of Marshall College have a lively interest in the progress of your studies. Colleges and Seminaries of Learning, for the most part, originate in a spirit of generous enterprize. Prior to the Reformation, these, and other institutions, of a like kind, grew from the bosom of the church ; and the vigilance of its councils seldom omitted to pledge the diocesan possessions for their maintenance. This care of learning ceased to be an Ecclesiastical duty after the Protestant organization ; but the cause of Education was rather promoted than retarded by the change.—The patronage which the mandates of the church no longer bestowed, was liberally supplied by the munificence of the civil authority, but chiefly by the voluntary offerings of the clergy and their flocks. From such a disinterested source Marshall College took its rise ; and no young man, admitted within its walls, should forget that the fountains of knowledge are there unsealed to him from a generous regard to his own elevation and improvement. Where is the recipient of literary provision, at once so kindly and amply made for his benefit, who can withhold, by a course of idleness and frivolity, the tribute of his grateful acknowledgement ?

An ambition to excel, should also be awakened in the breast of the Student, by the anxiety of the Professors for his future eminence. The youth who duly estimates the pains and diligence of his instructors, will rejoice, in after life, that the rewards of his virtuous toil

and study are witnessed with delight by those who gave to his untaught energies their successful direction. Professors and tutors cannot be personally known to the whole community; and it must, therefore, be expected that their standing and capacities will often be judged of by the proficiency of the graduates. True, experience has shown that this is an unjust criterion in the case; but it has also admonished us that the discernment is frequently wanting to provide a better. It is, then, no light consideration, that the literary and scientific character of an institution may thus be, in some degree, coupled with that of the student who has been trained in it, and doomed to share in the infamy that may befall him. A sensitive man will make many sacrifices to shield his own character from reproach; but when, by circumstances, it has become so intimately allied with the reputation of others, as to make them partakers of its honor or ignominy, there is no hazard or exertion which a generous mind would spare to merit the meed of praise.

Finally, gentlemen, those of you who are about closing your collegiate studies to mix with the world, will soon find, that all the learning you have been able to accumulate here, is but an introduction to the massive stores of literature that still lie before you. The seeds of knowledge may be planted in Seminaries, but they can be only fully cultivated in the intercourse of the world. The rules of logic or rhetoric may be acquired in the retirement of a scholar's study, but their highest utility and embellishment are derived from the exigencies of society. Libraries, teeming with instruction upon every branch of literature and science, the volume of Nature filled with the bright workmanship of its Divine Author, and the commerce of Society constantly unfolding its manifold lessons of wisdom and sagacity—all crowd around the graduated Student, when he enters upon his vocation in life, and address their forcible appeals to his pride and interest. While these abounding treasures are sufficient to satisfy the most ambitious mind, they should also inspire it with those sentiments of modesty and humility that are the crowning ornaments of true scholarship. But if "charity edifyeth, knowledge puffeth up," and the youth who is just fresh from the depths of philosophy, and the trials of Greek and Latin prosody, is apt to assume an air of superiority over others to whom fortune has been less lavish of her literary favors. Such exhibitions of conceit are always disgusting, and sure to incur their own punishment in early mortification.* Experi-

* We cannot withhold, upon this subject, the following extract from the pen of a distinguished living poet:

"Know that pride,
 "Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
 "Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
 "For any living thing, hath faculties
 "Which he has never used; that thought with him
 "Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
 "Is ever on himself doth look on none,
 "The least of Nature's works; one who might move
 "The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
 "Unlawful, ever. O he wiser, thou!
 "Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
 "True dignity abides with him alone
 "Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
 "Can still suspect, and still revere himself
 "In lowliness of heart."—WORDSWORTH.

ence and practice in the common engagements of life will often equip the mind with the elements of science, when there has been no aid from books ; and where the finished graduate may expect to encounter only the weakness and prejudices of ignorance, he is often liable to be surprised by a display of signal acuteness and information. "I have always noticed," says Gœthe, "that men of the world and of business, who are obliged to pay attention to many observations and reports produced at the moment, are the most agreeable to converse with even on scientific subjects. Their minds are unprejudiced ; while, on the contrary, men of learning usually attend to nothing but what they have already learned and taught." This critical observer of mankind well appreciated the distinction of Tully—*"Doctos homines et etiam usu peritos"*—the latter as well the former having high claims upon the respect of their fellow men.

And now, gentlemen, in parting, let me adjure you all, and severally, by the solemnity of the motives just enumerated, to consider gravely the responsibilities of the high relationships which you sustain.—Be it your praise to excel in the wide circle of your collegiate studies, so that you may adorn by a bright example, in future life, the walks of Literature, Morals, and Religion ; and may your Alma Mater, already eminent for the learning and discipline of her halls, gather increased honor and fame from the resplendent virtues and literary celebrity of her Alumni.

Samuel Johnson
L. Harris
New York